

2000 N. Beauregard St.
Alexandria, VA 22311
21 December 1983

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm writing this letter at work to try out the word processing system on our new computer, a VAX 11/780. The word processing is part of an "office automation" package that includes electronic mail, an appointment calendar, a desk calculator, and one or two other functions. The computer, of course, is mainly used to do calculations with various programming languages and to manage data bases for which there is a separate language altogether. I'm quite accustomed to word processors now as I used one in Charleston to write my report on a disk for easy transport back to CNA. So far only "unclassified" work can be done on this computer, but within a few months I expect to write everything on it and never use pencil and paper again. By then I and nearly everyone else in CNA will have a terminal on their desk - a great convenience.

I received Dad's letter yesterday. We're looking forward to your visit and I hope the weather will cooperate. I see on the weather map that one giant cold air mass is covering most of the nation and that your temperatures are very low. It is not quite so cold today although it was 22 degrees when I jogged into work this morning. Sometimes I can't get out at noon so run home after work and then back in the next morning. With plenty of clothes on it was not uncomfortable. Certainly we can all be grateful we don't live in Minnesota!

The clipping about activity in the Mediterranean was interesting to me. Actually they didn't follow the chain of command all the way to the end which is the admiral at sea on the aircraft carrier. The one in Gaeta is his superior. The job at sea is a precarious one since the on-scene commander is the one to be blamed if anything goes wrong which it always does. Since the staff has been in port only a few days since July, I am particularly happy my tour there is over. The immediate prospect of a port visit is the only factor which makes life at sea tolerable.

As you know, we leave Thursday on our tour to Rome. One function included is midnight mass at the Vatican on Christmas Eve. I guess we will go although St. Peter's square will probably be jammed with several million Italians. At least the weather should be mild (in the 50's) which makes it a pleasure to walk for miles picking out sights from the guidebook. We'll probably go jogging in the morning since our hotel is near the Tiber and there is a convenient walkway for several miles along the river. With this activity we should be able to handle the delicious and sizeable Italian meals we are anticipating.

I'm sure you will enjoy the holiday period. Please say hello to everyone for us and we will see you soon!

Love,

Jim